



# TRUST UNIFORM POLICY

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Department for Education delegates the responsibility for School Uniform to individual schools, academies or Multi-Academy Trusts.

The Sapientia Education Trust (SET) believes that uniform plays an important part in the life of our schools and helps to promote good behaviour and discipline amongst the pupil body. Uniform also helps to promote the ethos of a school, providing a sense of belonging and identity and sets an appropriate tone for the education of children.

SET allows each of its schools to decide on their own uniform arrangements with the following requirements:

- Ensure the uniform is smart, practical and affordable
- Give consideration to the comfort of the school uniform
- Have given consideration to how the uniform requirements might affect groups represented in the school, especially those who share protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010
- Take a sensible approach to allow for exceptions to be made during extreme weather, for example, allowing pupils to wear shorts in very hot weather or allowing trousers to be worn instead of skirts in very cold weather
- Ensure that their uniform is suitable and safe for pupils who walk or cycle to school, for instance, by allowing pupils to wear a coat which they could be visible in when it is dark going home
- Choose a PE kit(s) which are affordable, practical, comfortable and appropriate to the activity
- Ensure the uniform policy is published on the school's website so it is easy for parents (including parents of prospective pupils) to access and understand
- Set clear rules around appearance in their behaviour policy
- Ensure that multiple suppliers are available for branded items from the 1st September 2023
- Ensure that a uniform exchange is established and advertised to parents from September 2023

## 2.0 Government guidance on the cost of school uniforms

SET believes that where a school's uniform is too expensive, it can place an unreasonable burden on families. It is our policy that from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023, no school uniform in a trust school should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling unable to apply to, or attend a school of their choice due to the cost of the uniform.

All our schools are required to give high priority to cost considerations. Based on the statutory guidance outlined in the DfE's Cost of School Uniform document, we require all our schools to be fully compliant by the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023, and sooner wherever possible.

To support this process, guidance has been issued to our schools to ensure that they have by the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023:

1. Made changes to the uniform policy, such as removing any unnecessary branded items
2. Published the uniform policy on the school's website and ensured that it is easily understood
3. Made sure that second-hand uniforms are available to acquire (either from the school directly or from an established scheme)

### **3.0 Parent choice and branded items**

SET fully support making school uniform affordable and accessible for all children, and we have reviewed and changed our school uniform to reflect the requirements outlined in the statutory guidance. Primarily this involves a reduction in the number of required branded items, allowing parents to shop for the most affordable clothes across a wide range of retailers.

#### **3.1 Primary Schools**

From September 2022, there will be no requirement for students in our primary schools to wear branded uniform items with the exception of the Prep School.

#### **3.2 Secondary Schools and the Prep School**

From September 2023, and sooner where there are no contracts in place, there will be no requirement for parents to purchase branded school uniform exclusively from a specific supplier. Any item of required branded uniform will be available from at least two suppliers allowing parents to choose the most convenient or cost-effective supplier.

Whilst stocks last, parents are welcome to continue to purchase and use legacy branded items and there is no expectation that parents will need to replace branded items with non-branded items.

### **4.0 Human rights, equality and discrimination considerations**

When making decisions about our uniform policies, our schools will take into account their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

SET schools are required to consider the impact of their uniform policy on pupils who share a protected characteristic. The relevant protected characteristics which schools consider when developing and implementing their uniform policy are:

- sex
- religion or belief
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy

SET schools are required to ensure their uniform policy is as inclusive as possible, ensuring that all pupils are able to wear the uniform comfortably.

#### **4.1 Religion or beliefs**

SET schools recognise the right of students to outwardly manifest their religious beliefs, but not necessarily at all times, places or in a particular manner.

SET schools will be sensitive to the needs of different cultures, races and religions and act reasonably in accommodating these needs, without compromising important school policies, such as school safety or discipline. SET believes it should be possible for most religious requirements to be met within a school uniform policy and SET schools will act reasonably through consultation and dialogue in accommodating these.

Where a SET school has good reason for restricting an individual's freedoms, for example, the promotion of cohesion and good order in the school, or genuine health and safety or security considerations, the restriction of an individual's rights to manifest their religion or belief may be justified.

#### **4.2 Discrimination**

In developing and implementing its school uniform policy, SET schools recognise their obligations not to discriminate unlawfully.

To avoid discriminating against any pupil, including those who share particular protected characteristics, SET schools will aim for their uniform policy to be as inclusive as possible.

Where necessary, SET schools may engage with parents and pupils when developing their uniform policy to ensure that it is suitable for their school community, recognising that their school community may change over time.

### **5.0 Complaints and challenges to school uniform policy**

Whilst SET provides oversight on school uniform, disputes about school uniform should be resolved locally and should be pursued in accordance with the school's complaints policy.

### **6.0 Pupil non-compliance**

SET schools reserve the right to discipline pupils for breaching the school's rules on appearance or uniform. This process will be carried out in accordance with the school's published behaviour policy. SET schools aim to deal with pupil non-compliance in a proportionate and fair way.

## 7.0 Publishing uniform requirements

SET schools will publish their uniform requirements on their website and also make the information available in print. When required or requested, SET schools will also publish the information in different languages and accessibility formats.

The information provided on the school website (and in other document forms) will be broken down into three sections:

1. Uniform requirements
2. Supplier information for branded items
3. A link to the school's published behaviour policy

This information, in conjunction with this **Trust Uniform Policy** document and information in the **School Behaviour Policy**, forms the **School Uniform Policy**.